

Recombinant Human Interleukin-8 Is a Potent Activator of Canine Neutrophil Aggregation, Migration, and Leukotriene B₄ Biosynthesis

M. Krogsgaard Thomsen, C. Gronhøj Larsen, H. Klem Thomsen, D. Kirstein, T. Skak-Nielsen, I. Ahnfelt-Rønne, and K. Thestrup-Pedersen

Department of Pharmacology (MKT, DK, TS-N, IA-R), Leo Pharmaceutical Products, Ballerup; Department of Dermatology (CGL, KT-P), Marselisborg Hospital, University of Aarhus; and Department of Pathology (HKT), Bispebjerg Hospital, Copenhagen, Denmark

Interleukin-8 (IL-8), formerly known as NAP-1, is formed by a variety of cells upon stimulation with IL-1 or tumor necrosis factor (TNF). The biologic activity of the cytokine involves activation of almost every neutrophil function studied so far in different species. In the present study, we compared the effects of recombinant human IL-8 (rIL-8) and the lipid mediators, leukotriene B₄ (LTB₄) and platelet-activating factor (PAF), on neutrophil functions in dogs. All three chemotactic factors induced neutrophil aggregation and chemotaxis, with rIL-8 being far more potent than LTB₄ and PAF. The migration induced by rIL-8 was significantly greater than that observed towards LTB₄ and PAF. In the aggregation assay, rIL-8 was shown for the first time to be a potent stimulant. The aggregation response was more per-

sistent than that obtained with LTB₄ and PAF and the potency of rIL-8 was greater. An intradermal dose-response study showed that rIL-8 is an extremely potent inducer of selective neutrophil infiltration in canine skin. The infiltration was more pronounced than following injection of LTB₄ or PAF. It was proposed that the superior effect of rIL-8 was caused by a synergistic effect between injected rIL-8 and LTB₄, which was shown to be produced in biologically active amounts by canine neutrophils stimulated with rIL-8. From a therapeutic point of view, the simultaneous presence of rIL-8 and LTB₄ in inflammatory skin diseases highlights the need to develop drugs that inhibit the production and/or effect of both mediators. *J Invest Dermatol* 96:260-266, 1991

Until recently, human interleukin-1 (IL-1) was believed to be a stimulant of neutrophil migration in vitro [1-2]. However, highly purified natural IL-1 as well as rIL-1 proved unable to stimulate the migration of human neutrophils in vitro [3] and it only acts as a weak chemoattractant for canine neutrophils [4]. Furthermore, IL-1 activity in the conditioned medium of LPS-stimulated monocytes could be separated from the activity of a novel 8-kD neutrophil chemotactic peptide, subsequently purified and molecularly cloned [3,5]. Because we additionally established the potent T-lymphocyte chemotactic activity of this factor, it is now termed IL-8 [6]. IL-8 is inducible in monocytes, keratinocytes, dermal fibroblasts, and endothelial cells when stimulated with IL-1 or tumor necrosis factor (TNF) [6] and, apart from promoting neutrophil migration in vitro and in vivo, IL-8 also exerts other biologic effects on neutrophils. Thus, IL-8 induces enhanced release of lysosomal

enzymes and activates the respiratory burst leading to generation of superoxide in neutrophils [7-9]. Also, human neutrophils and IL-3 primed basophils stimulated with IL-8 have been shown to generate leukotriene B₄ (LTB₄) and LTC₄, respectively, due to activation of the 5-lipoxygenase enzyme [10,11]. This indicates that IL-8 promotes some of the effects formerly assigned to IL-1 and TNF [12]. IL-8 is now believed to be an important pro-inflammatory mediator involved in the pathogenesis of neutrophil-dominated human inflammatory diseases such as psoriasis [13] and rheumatoid arthritis [14]. Human rIL-8 provokes a neutrophil infiltrate when administered to humans [15] but has been found also to activate neutrophils from other species, including the mouse, guinea pig, rat, and rabbit [12,16,17].

In the present study, we compared the in vitro and in vivo activity of rIL-8 and the lipid mediators, LTB₄ and PAF, on canine neutrophil aggregation and migration. Further, we studied the effect of IL-8 on 5-lipoxygenase-catalyzed arachidonic acid (AA) metabolism in canine neutrophils.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Animals Healthy Beagle dogs that had not received any drug or test compound the preceding two weeks were used. For chemotaxis, LTB₄ production, and aggregation experiments 20, 60, and 100 ml of EDTA-stabilized venous blood was obtained, respectively. Experimental, intradermal injections of rIL-1 α , rIL-8, LTB₄, and PAF were performed on the dorsum of dogs that had been shaved 2 h earlier.

Isolation of Neutrophils Neutrophils with a purity of at least 95% were isolated as previously described [18]. Briefly, red blood cells were allowed to sediment for 45 min on methylcellulose, fol-

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Reprint requests to: M. K. Thomsen, Department of Pharmacology, Leo Pharmaceutical Products, DK-2750 Ballerup, Denmark.

Abbreviations:

- AA: arachidonic acid
- BSA: bovine serum albumin
- HBSS: Hank's balanced salt solution
- IL-1 (-8): interleukin-1 (-8)
- LTB₄: leukotriene B₄
- PAF: platelet-activating factor
- r: recombinant human
- RC-HPLC: reverse-phase high-performance liquid chromatography
- TNF: tumor necrosis factor

lowed by centrifugation of leukocyte-rich plasma on Lymphoprep (Nycomed, Norway) for 30 min at $400 \times g$. The resulting neutrophil-containing cell pellet was then washed twice in Hank's balanced salt solution (HBSS) (Gibco, Grand Island, NY) containing 0.5% bovine serum albumin (BSA) (Sigma Chemical Co., St. Louis, MO) and the neutrophil suspension was adjusted to 2×10^6 cells per ml. Cell recovery was between 40 and 50%, and viability was approximately 97% as determined by the Eosin Y exclusion test.

Chemotaxis Assay Cell migration was studied in a 48-well chemotaxis microchamber (Neuroprobe Inc., Bethesda, MD) using 10 μ m thick, 3- μ m-pore polyvinyl pyrrolidone-free polycarbonate filters (Nucleopore Corp., Pleasanton, CA) [19]. Twenty-five microliters prewarmed LTB_4 (Ultrafine Chemicals, UK), PAF (Sigma), or rIL-8 [17] diluted in HBSS containing 0.5% BSA was placed in the lower well and 50 μ l cell suspension (2×10^6 cells per ml) was placed in the upper chamber. Incubation proceeded for 45 min at 37° , 5% CO_2 , and 98% humidity. Following this, filters were fixed and stained with Coomassie brilliant blue (Sigma). Migration was estimated by lower surface counting. The mean of the medians of five individual readings on each of duplicate filters was calculated and the results were expressed as chemotactic differentials.

Aggregation Assay Cells were isolated using divalent cation-free HBSS and adjusted to 3×10^7 cells per ml. Aggregation was assayed as described previously [18]. Briefly, 200 μ l neutrophil suspension, 5 μ l recalcification medium (40 mM $CaCl_2$ and 30 mM $MgCl_2$) was placed in a siliconized aggregometer cuvette and aggregation was induced by adding rIL-8, LTB_4 , or PAF, once the baseline was stable. The Payton aggregometer was set at 37° , 900 rpm, with 0 and 100% light transmission representing transmission through the cell suspension and a cell suspension to which 10% HBSS was added, respectively. Light transmission was recorded for 5 min and the extent of aggregation was expressed as the percentage increase in light transmission. All experiments were carried out in duplicate.

Phagocytosis A visual *Candida albicans* blastospore ingestion assay was used as previously described [4].

rIL-8 Induced LTB_4 Production Suspensions of 10^7 purified neutrophils in 1 ml divalent cation-free HBSS were preincubated with 8 μ M AA (Sigma) or 1 μ Ci [$1-^{14}C$]AA (specific activity, 54.2 mCi per mmol; New England Nuclear, FRG) for 5 min (37°) before stimulation (5 min at 37°) with 100 nM rIL-8 in a final volume of 1.6 ml Ca^{++}/Mg^{++} -enriched HBSS [10]. After cooling and centrifugation at 4° , the supernatants were freeze-dried and deproteinized with 200 μ l eluent for reverse-phase high-performance liquid chromatography (RP-HPLC): 70% methanol, 30% water, 0.08% acetic acid, adjusted to an apparent pH of 6.2 with NH_4OH . Samples of 100 μ l were applied to a Merck LiChrospher 100 RP-18 (125 \times 4 mm, 5 μ m) column and analytes were eluted at a flow rate of 1 ml per min. LTB_4 was detected at 270 nm by comparing the retention time with that of synthetic LTB_4 .

In Vivo Experiments rIL-8 was diluted to a final concentration of 0.5, 5, or 10 nM in phosphate-buffered saline and injected intradermally in duplicate in a volume of 100 μ l. At 2, 4, and 6 h after injection, the skin sites were infiltrated with 0.5% lidocaine (Leostein, Leo Pharmaceutical Products, Denmark) subcutaneously, and a 4-mm punch biopsy (Stiefel, Belgium) was taken. Further intradermal experiments were carried out with varying concentrations of rIL-1 α (Boehringer Mannheim, FRG), LTB_4 , and PAF. Because IL-1 [20], but not IL-8 [21], induces biosynthesis of proteins in various cells, rIL-1 α was administered alone or in combination with a protein biosynthesis inhibitive dose [20], 0.1 μ mol, of cycloheximide (Sigma).

Histopathology The biopsies were processed by conventional techniques, and histologic preparations were stained with haematoxylin-eosin. All experiments were blinded to the observer, carried out in duplicate, and corrected for solvent controls in each case. The

presence of inflammatory cells was quantified by assigning a score of 1, 2, and 3 to skin sections with mild, modest, and pronounced dermal neutrophil infiltration, respectively, as previously described [22].

Myeloperoxidase Determination Quantitative comparison of the neutrophil infiltrate occurring in response to rIL-8, LTB_4 , and PAF was performed by determining the skin content of the specific neutrophil enzyme marker, myeloperoxidase, as previously reported [23]. Briefly, duplicate skin biopsies were homogenized in a hexadecyltrimethylammonium-bromide (Sigma) buffer, and the homogenate was freeze/thawed 3 times, followed by centrifugation at $2,500 \times g$ for 15 min ($4^\circ C$). The supernatant was incubated for 10 min with a tetramethylbenzidine/ H_2O_2 solution, and the absorbance at 655 nm was measured. The results were expressed as the number of neutrophils per cm^2 skin, as determined from a simultaneously obtained standard curve for purified blood neutrophil suspensions.

Statistical Methods Student t test for paired samples was used for comparison of in vitro and in vivo data.

RESULTS

Chemotaxis Dose-response relationships for induction of canine and human neutrophil chemotaxis were obtained for rIL-8, LTB_4 , and PAF by the lower surface count technique. All three chemoattractants were capable of inducing dose-dependent chemotaxis in cells from both species. The only significant ($p < 0.05$) difference found regarding the maximal response (E_{max}) to the mediators was that rIL-8 was more active towards canine cells than LTB_4 and PAF (Fig 1). In both species, however, the molar potency of rIL-8 was by far the greatest (Table 1).

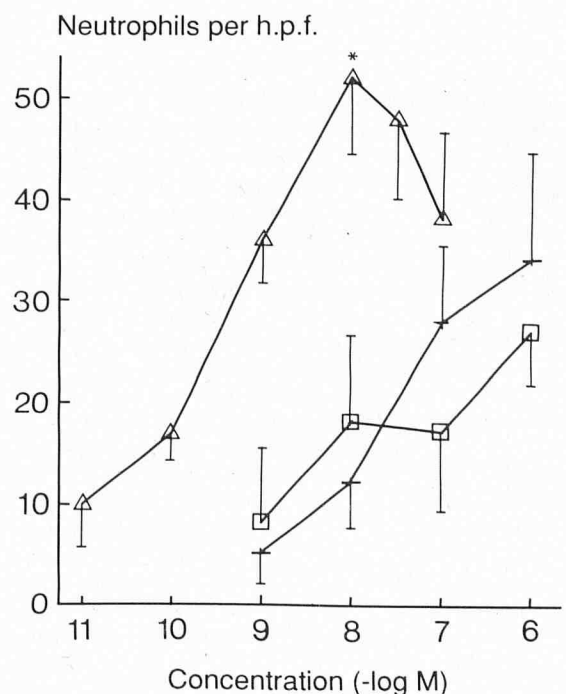


Figure 1. Effect of varying concentrations of IL-8 (Δ), LTB_4 (+), and PAF (\square) on canine neutrophil migration. Cells were allowed to migrate for 45 min (37° , 5% CO_2) towards the chemoattractant, and the locomotory response was corrected for random migration, i.e., migration in the absence of chemoattractant. Results are presented as the means \pm SE of four individual experiments, each experiment including assay of all three chemoattractants on cells from one dog. *, $p < 0.05$ as compared to maximal migration towards LTB_4 and PAF.

Table I. Potency (EC_{50}) and Efficacy (E_{max}) of IL-8, LTB_4 , and PAF in Canine and Human Migration and Aggregation Assays

Cells	Assay	Mediator	EC_{50}^a	E_{max}^b
Canine	Migration	IL-8	0.2	52
Canine	Migration	LTB_4	23	34
Canine	Migration	PAF	123	27
Human	Migration	IL-8	0.1	28
Human	Migration	LTB_4	2	30
Human	Migration	PAF	110	25
Canine	Aggregat.	IL-8	0.1	57
Canine	Aggregat.	LTB_4	8	62
Canine	Aggregat.	PAF	32	63
Human	Aggregat.	IL-8	0.1	48
Human	Aggregat.	LTB_4	3	56
Human	Aggregat.	PAF	57	51

^a nM.^b Cells per high-power field.

Aggregation rIL-8, LTB_4 , and PAF all induced aggregation of canine neutrophils in a dose-dependent manner (Fig 2). The onset of aggregation induced by rIL-8 was relatively slow when compared to LTB_4 and PAF-induced aggregation (Fig 3). However, cell aggregation following stimulation with IL-8 was more persistent than following stimulation with LTB_4 or PAF (Fig 3). Using both canine and human neutrophils, the dose-response curve for rIL-8 was a factor 30 to 600 to the left of the curves for LTB_4 and PAF (Table I), in accord with the potency ratios (ratio between concentrations of two different mediators evoking the same biological response) in the chemotaxis assay.

Phagocytosis At optimal serum opsonin (C_{3b}) concentrations, no effect of rIL-8, LTB_4 , or PAF on phagocytosis was seen (data not shown).

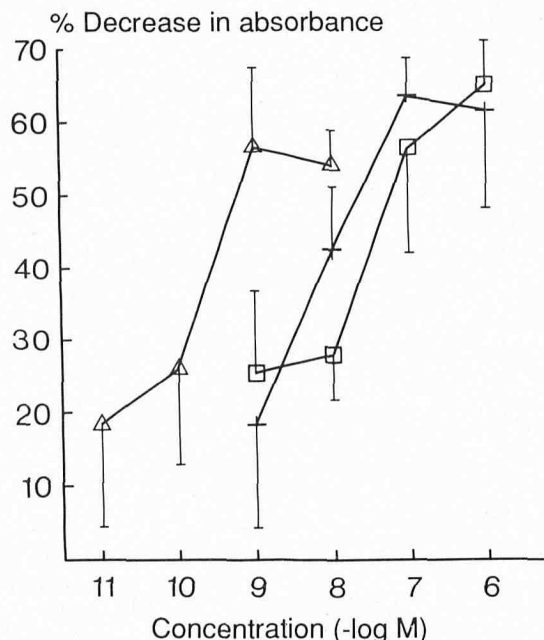


Figure 2. The peak aggregatory response of canine neutrophils to varying concentrations of rIL-8 (Δ), LTB_4 (+), and PAF (\square). Light transmission was measured for 5 min and peak aggregation was measured as percentage increase in light transmission. The experiments were performed at 37°C and 900 rpm. Results are shown as the means \pm SE of three individuals experiments, each experiment assessing the effect of all three mediators on cells from one dog.

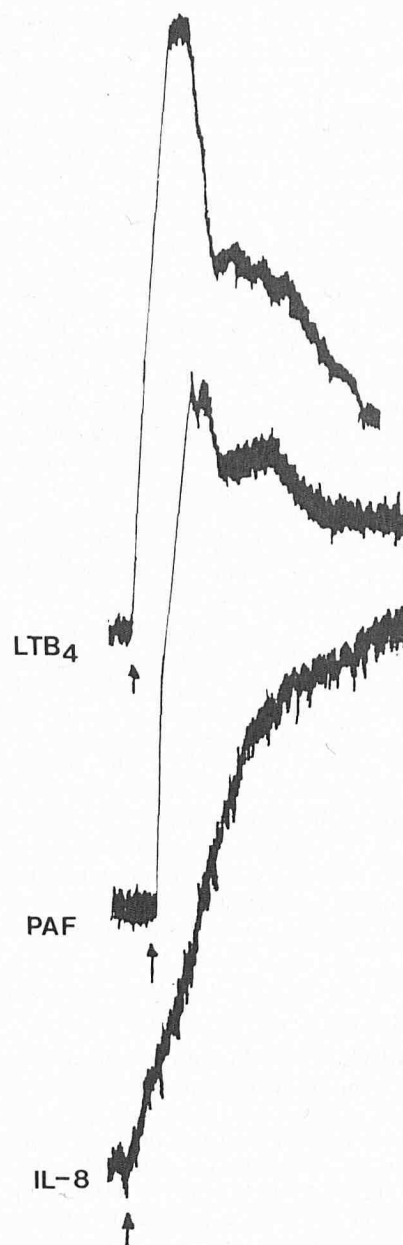
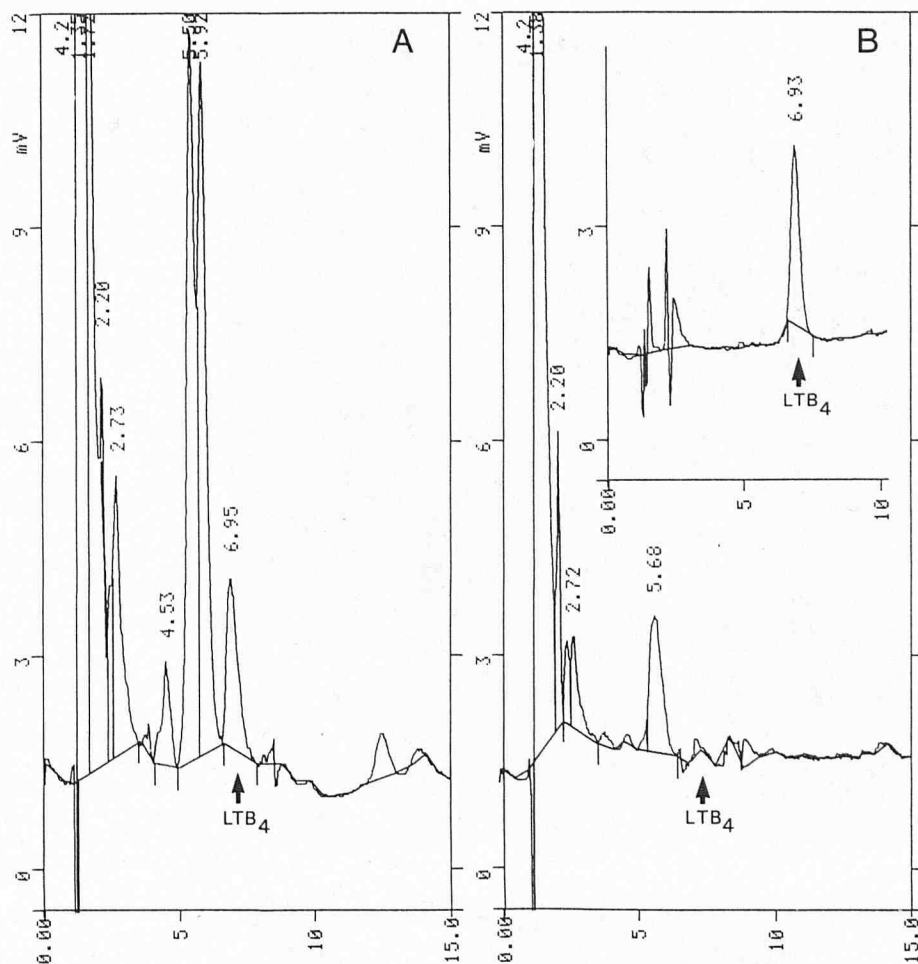


Figure 3. Typical aggregation pattern obtained with rIL-8 (1 nM), LTB_4 (100 nM), and PAF (100 nM) in canine neutrophils. The stimulant was added as indicated by arrows. The percentage increase in light transmission is shown.

rIL-8-Induced Production of LTB_4 by Canine Neutrophils

Incubation of purified canine neutrophils with 100 nM rIL-8 in the presence of 8 μ M exogenous AA resulted in the production of substantial amounts of LTB_4 (up to more than 100 ng/ 10^7 cells) and other UV-absorbing peaks, as shown in a typical chromatogram (Fig 4A). When neutrophils were incubated with AA in the absence of IL-8, only trace amounts of LTB_4 could be detected (Fig 4B). The identification of LTB_4 was based on co-elution with authentic LTB_4 (Fig 4, inset) and comparison of chemotactic activity of the peak eluting at 6.9 min with that of authentic LTB_4 . For this peak, the EC_{50} (concentration evoking half-maximal response) for induction of chemotaxis was found to be 9 ng per ml, which is similar to the EC_{50} of 7 ng per ml reported for authentic LTB_4 in the chemotaxis section. The peaks eluting earlier than LTB_4 represented chemotactically inert products of AA metabolism, as shown by assay of migration and experiments with ^{14}C -labeled AA in which peaks of

Figure 4. RP-HPLC chromatograms showing the production of LTB₄ by rIL-8 stimulated neutrophils. 10⁷ cells were preincubated with 8 μ M AA and incubated with 100 nM rIL-8 (A) or buffer (B) in the presence of Ca⁺⁺ and Mg⁺⁺. The inset shows the elution of 32 ng synthetic LTB₄. Abscissa, min; ordinate, mV corresponding to milliabsorbance. A typical chromatogram out of three individual experiments with different dogs is shown.



radioactivity co-eluted with the peaks shown in Fig 4A. By analogy with the similar elution profile obtained in a previous study with human cells [10], the early peaks may represent 20-COOH-LTB₄, 20-OH-LTB₄, trans-LTB₄, and epi-trans-LTB₄.

In Vivo Experiments Intradermal injection of rIL-1 α in dogs did not provoke any macroscopic changes. Microscopically, a modest but selective dose- and time-dependent microvascular margination and emigration of neutrophils into the dermis was found (Fig 5A). Following coadministration of rIL-1 α and cycloheximide, the accumulation of neutrophils was no longer significant (Fig 6), indicating that biosynthesis of a chemotactic protein was responsible for the observed infiltration of neutrophils induced by rIL-1 α . Intradermal injection of rIL-8 at concentrations of 0.5 and 5 nM was accompanied by a marked, circumscribed erythema that was evident as early as 2 h after injection. Microscopically, the response to rIL-8 at both concentrations was qualitatively similar to rIL-1 α , but both the number and intensity of the predominantly perivascular infiltrates of neutrophils was much greater (Fig 5B and Fig 7). As shown by quantitative determination of the neutrophil marker enzyme — myeloperoxidase — in the skin, the inflammatory reaction induced by rIL-8 was also significantly greater than observed with LTB₄ and PAF at any time following injection of different concentrations (4 h response to 10 nM rIL-8, 100 nM LTB₄, and PAF shown in Table II). LTB₄ elicited responses that were quantitatively similar to rIL-1 α , but significantly greater than PAF.

DISCUSSION

IL-8, LTB₄, and PAF are known to be present in inflamed human skin in concentrations up to the nanomolar range in certain dermatoses [13,24–26]. In humans, these mediators have been shown to

attract primarily neutrophils in vivo [15,27,28], and they probably represent the most important cell-derived neutrophil chemotactic factors present in the skin during inflammation. We have compared the chemotactic and cell aggregating activities of the two lipid mediators and rIL-8 using canine neutrophils as target cells and human neutrophils as reference cells. The potency of rIL-8 was by far the greatest in both assays, potency ratios between rIL-8 and the lipid mediators ranging from approximately 20 to 1000 depending on the assay and the species.

The observation that rIL-8 acts as a potent and persistent stimulant of neutrophil aggregation, also termed homotypic cell adhesion, has not been made previously. This type of homotypic cell adhesion correlates with ligand-induced receptor activation [29] and depends, in contrast to heterotypic adhesion between neutrophils and endothelial cells, solely on the activation of the adhesive surface glycoprotein CD11_b/CD18 [30]. The aggregatory neutrophil response to rIL-8 is thus a functional correlate to the recent observation that IL-8 enhances the binding activity of CD11_b/CD18 on human neutrophils [31]. The present findings are also in accord with a previous study on human neutrophils that has documented the presence of IL-8 receptors with a higher affinity than reported for other chemotactic factors, including PAF and LTB₄ [32].

An intriguing observation was made in the canine chemotaxis assay. At the optimal concentration, 10 nM, the migration induced by rIL-8 was significantly greater ($p < 0.05$) than that observed towards any concentration of the lipid mediators. Because a recent study dealing with LTB₄, C_{5a}, PAF, formylmethionyl peptide, and LTD₄ revealed that directed migration of canine neutrophils towards LTB₄ was unsurpassed in potency [33], the chemotactic potency and efficacy of rIL-8 in this species is evident. This in vitro

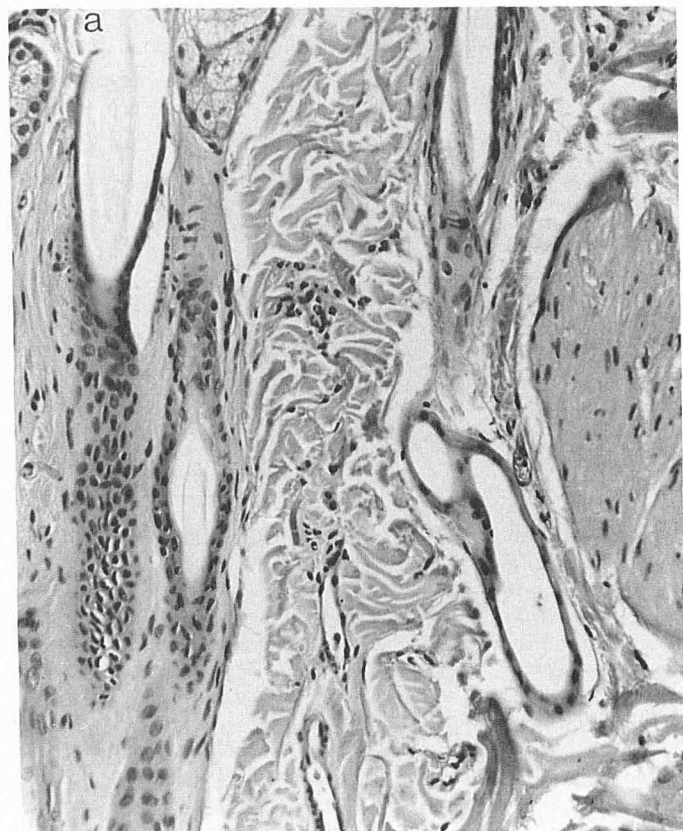


Figure 5. The histologic appearance of canine skin 4 h after injection of 250 I.U. rIL-1 α per ml (a; score 1 response) or 5 nM rIL-8 (b; score 3 response). In both instances, the cellular infiltrate was mainly in a perivascular location, and consisted exclusively of neutrophils. Hematoxylin-eosin $\times 100$.

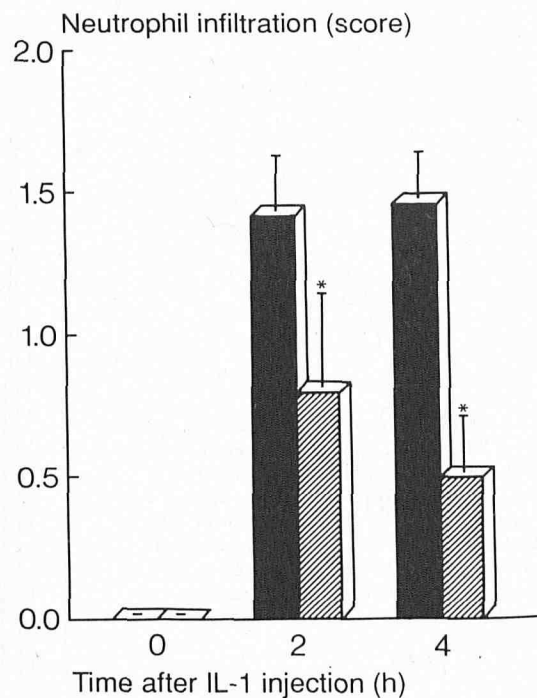


Figure 6. Neutrophil infiltration following intradermal injection in dogs of 250 I.U. rIL-1 α per ml with (shaded) or without (black) 0.1 μ mol cycloheximide. Neutrophil infiltration was quantified as follows [22]: 0, normal skin; 1, mild; 2, modest; and 3, pronounced infiltration. Results are presented as the means \pm SE of three experiments in which the response was corrected for sham injection sites in each case.

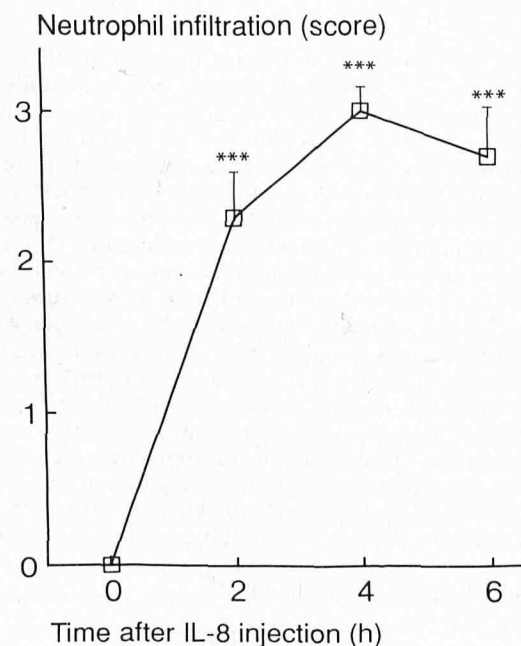


Figure 7. Neutrophil infiltration following intradermal injection in dogs of 5 nM rIL-8. Cellular infiltration was quantified as described for Fig 5. Results are presented as the mean \pm SE of three individual experiments.

Table II. Dermal Neutrophil Infiltration Following Injection of 10 nM IL-8, 100 nM LTB₄, and 100 nM PAF

	Sham Sites	rIL-8	LTB ₄	PAF
Cells ^a	2.06 ± 0.71	17.50 ± 3.26	7.56 ± 0.79	3.50 ± 0.63
Score	0	3	1-2	0-1

^a × 10⁶ per cm².

feature of canine neutrophils, which was also evident in vivo, may in part explain the observation that accumulation of neutrophils at cutaneous cell-mediated immuno-inflammatory sites is much more pronounced in the canine than in the human organism [34-36]. The canine intradermal rIL-8 experiments were in support of this hypothesis, because massive and selective neutrophil infiltration occurred and by far exceeded the infiltration seen following injection of classical lipid and peptide chemoattractants. Potent in vivo action of IL-8 has previously been reported in the skin of rats [6], rabbits [16], and mice [17].

With respect to the modulatory actions of IL-8 on inflammation, a recent report has shown that endothelial IL-8 inhibits adhesion between leukocytes and endothelium, suggesting an anti-inflammatory role for this mediator in certain situations [37]. We propose, however, that IL-8 acting from the tissue side of the microcirculation causes severe inflammation in part by inducing production of LTB₄ by neutrophils, as shown previously [10] and in the present study. The amounts of LTB₄ found in the present in vitro experiments are clearly sufficient to promote neutrophil-endothelial interactions in vitro [38] and in vivo [39] through an effect on both neutrophils and endothelial cells [38]. Due to the rapid tissue clearance of LTB₄, it has in fact been speculated [40] that the most important site at which LTB₄ exerts its pro-inflammatory action is the vascular endothelium where LTB₄ rapidly and potently causes adhesion between endothelial cells and neutrophils [38,39]. Following the adhesive interaction, the neutrophils then migrate towards chemoattractants with a longer tissue half-life, e.g., IL-8.

Because IL-8 has been shown to be the main neutrophil-chemotactic cytokine induced by IL-1 [41,42], we also studied in vivo the indirect chemoattractant response to rIL-1α as a measure of the likely contribution of IL-8 to the overall response. By blocking biosynthesis of proteins with cycloheximide, we observed that significant cell infiltration no longer occurred, indicating that biosynthesis of a chemotactic protein is of prime importance in the canine cutaneous response to rIL-1α. This finding is in agreement with several lines of evidence which suggest that the in vivo chemoattractant properties of rIL-1 are mediated indirectly through IL-8 [5,12,20,41,42].

Present and previous findings support the notion that IL-8, released from sites of injury, immune-mediated reactions and microbial infection, may contribute to the formation of inflammation in the canine and human organism by activating neutrophil functions, including migration, aggregation and LTB₄ production. IL-8 may thus become the target for future pharmacologic intervention, aimed at inhibiting either biosynthesis of, or receptor activation by, IL-8. With respect to the former, we have recently shown that a novel inhibitor of leukotriene biosynthesis, ETH615,* potently inhibits mRNA expression of IL-8 in various cell types [43]. This compound further inhibits zymosan-induced cutaneous inflammation [44], which is in part cytokine-mediated [20], thus supporting the hypothesis that IL-8 is an important mediator of inflammatory reactions in the skin. The present experiments together with the fact that the mediator profile encountered in inflamed canine skin resembles that of humans [44] suggest that the dog may serve as an appropriate model for development of anti-inflammatory drugs with a novel mode of action.

In conclusion, we have described rIL-8 as a potent activator of canine neutrophil aggregation, migration and LTB₄ biosynthesis, suggesting the involvement of this novel cytokine in canine immune-inflammation.

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